

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

USLO SACLANT

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OSLO 2153

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED BRUSSELS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,UR,SV,NO

SUBJECT: NORWAY PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON RELATIONS WITH USSR
IN THE NORTH RAISES EYEBROWS.

SUMMARY: IN MAY 20 SPEECH TO NORWEGIAN DEFENSE COLLEGE, PRIME
MINISTER BRATTELI DISCUSSED RELATIONS WITH USSR IN BARENTS
SEA AND SVALBARD AREA IN TERMS WHICH SUGGESTED MORE THAN USUAL
SENSITIVITY TO SOVIET SECURITY INTERESTS AND CONCERN TO
WORK OUT BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH USSR WHICH WOULD MINIMIZE
DANGER OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY BY THIRD COUNTRIES IN THE AREA.
BRATTELI WAS ALERTED TO THE INTERPRETATION BEING PLACED ON
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HIS WORDS BY RESERVATIONS EXPRESSED TO HIM DIRECTLY, AND THROUGH

FOREIGN MINISTER, BY US,FRG AND UK AMBASSADORS. FACT THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR INTERPRETED SPEECH AS INVITATION FOR CLOSER SOVIET-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS IN THE ARCTIC UNDERSCORED NEED FOR CLARIFICATION OF BRATTELI REMARKS--PARTICULARLY SINCE SPEECH OCCURRED ON EVE OF VISIT TO MOSCOW OF LOS MINISTER JENS EVENSON TO DISCUSS EXPANDING FISHERY LIMITS TO 50 OR 200 MILES AND COULD BE READ BY KREMLIN AS CONCESSION INTENDED TO ELICIT SOVIET COOPERATION. NORWEGIANS INSIST BRATTELI'S INTENTION WAS SIMPLY TO UNDERSCORE NEED FOR CLEAR-CUT AGREEMENTS WITH SOVIETS IN THE NORTH AND NORWEGIAN CONTROL OVER ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE AREA, AND GUIDANCE TO THIS EFFECT HAS BEEN SENT OUT TO THE FIELD. SOME OF THE LANGUAGE IN SPEECH WAS APPARENTLY TAKEN BY BRATTELI FROM POLICY OPTION PAPER ON RELATIONS WITH USSR PRESENTLY BEING CONSIDERED BY NORWEGIAN CABINET, WHICH WILL PRESUMABLY FORCE DECISION FINALLY ON WHETHER NORWAY'S ALLIES WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN OFFSHORE OIL OPERATIONS IN BARENTS SEA. END SUMMARY

1. IN SPEECH TO NORWEGIAN DEFENSE COLLEGE, PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI DISCUSSED RELATIONS WITH THE USSR IN THE BARENTS SEA AND SVALBARD IN TERMS WHICH ENCOURAGED MISINTERPRETATION IN BOTH MOSCOW AND WESTERN CAPITALS. DISCUSSING THE EFFECT OF THE "EXPOSED STRATEGIC AND MILITARY POSITION," OF NORWAY IN THE NORTH ON ITS EXPLOITATION OF RESOURCES IN THE OCEAN AREAS AND ON THE OCEAN BEDS, BRATTELI STATED:
--"IN THE YEAR TO COME, A MAIN FEATURE OF SOVIET-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS THERE "WILL BE THE JOINT INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES IN MAINTAINING PEACE IN THE AREA AND IN REACHING CLEAR AGREEMENT ABOUT ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN AND ON THESE OCEAN AREAS."
-- NEGOTIATIONS TO DETERMINE THE BORDERLINE BETWEEN THE NORWEGIAN AND SOVIET SECTORS ARE ONE ASPECT OF THIS PROBLEM; THEY WILL BE RESUMED "IN THE NEAR FUTURE."
--THE SOVIET UNION HAS "VITAL INTERESTS IN MAINTAINING FREE PASSAGE IN THESE RELATIVELY NARROW AND DEEP WATERS BETWEEN NORWAY AND SVALBARD," AND "EXTENSIVE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY" THERE COULD BE "CONSTRUED BY THE SOVIETS AS INTERFERING WITH THEIR FREE PASSAGE AND ENABLING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ALIEN OUTPOSTS NEAR THE LARGE MILITARY BASES ON THE KOLA PENINSULA."
-- THE FUTURE EXPLOITATION OF THE RESOURCES IN NORWEGIAN WATERS
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SHALL THEREFORE BE SUBJECT TO NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY AND "NATIONAL CONTROL AND INSPECTION OF THE OIL ACTIVITIES,FISHERIES AND OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES ARE BASIC ELEMENTS OF NORWEGIAN POLITICS."
--"THE OPENING OF LARGE OCEAN AREAS IN THE NORTH FOR INTERNATIONAL EXPLOITATION UNDER THE RULES OF THE SVALBARD TREATY CANNOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF ANY MAJOR POWER."

2. THIS STATEMENT AROUSED CONCERN IN THE WESTERN DIPLOMATIC

COMMUNITY FOR SEVERAL REASONS: (A) IT WENT FURTHER IN APPEARING TO SEEK ACCOMODATION WITH THE SOVIETS IN THE ARCTIC AREA THAN ANY STATEMENT IN RECENT YEARS, BEING MORE CONCERNED TO ARTICULATE SOVIET FEARS THAN THE USSR ITSELF; (B) FOR A COUNTRY PREVIOUSLY CONCERNED TO RESIST ANY CONCOMINIUM WITH THE SOVIETS IN THE NORTH, IT HAD A STRONG CONDOMINIUM FLAVOR; (C) IT IMPLIED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE TO DIVIDE ALL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE NORTH BETWEEN THEMSELVES, AND THAT NORWAY WOULD SEE TO IT THAT NO FOREIGN INTERESTS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE IN AN AREA DEFINED BY NORWAY AS SENSITIVE FOR THE USSR; (D) IT EXPLICITLY REJECTED ANY CLAIMS WHICH NORWAY'S ALLIES MIGHT HAVE TO OFFSHORE OIL EXPLOITATION UNDER THE TERMS OF THE SVALBARD TREATY. THE EMBASSY HAD BEEN TOLD BY A WELL-INFORMED NORWEGIAN SPECIALIST ON ARCTIC PROBLEMS THAT THERE WAS A SHARP DEBATE WITHIN NORWEGIAN POLICY CIRCLES OVER THE DESIRABILITY OF MAKING SOME UNILATERAL COMMITMENT TO THE SOVIETS ON THE MATTER OF FOREIGN OIL OPERATIONS IN THE BARENTS SEA. THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT APPEARED TO REPRESENT A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF SUCH A UNILATERAL GUARANTEE.

3. I USED THE OCCASION OF A MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDEN-
LUND ON MAY 23 TO EXPRESS MY RESERVATIONS REGARDING THE P.M.'S

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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 02 OSLO 2153

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED BRUSSELS

SPEECH. FRYDENLUND EXPRESSED SURPRISE AND CONCERN OVER MY DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEECH WHICH HE HAD SEEN ONLY IN FIRST DRAFT BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR ISRAEL. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY SHAKEN BY THE PLEASED REACTION OF THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WHO CAME IN LAST WEEK TO PROTEST THE LANGUAGE ON BERLIN IN THE NORWEGIAN-FRG TRADE AGREEMENT; FRYDENLUND SAID HE HAD TO DISCOURAGE KIRICHENKO FROM READING THE SPEECH AS AN INVITATION FOR CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE USSR IN THE NORTH. FRYDENLUND EXPLAINED THAT THERE WAS A DOCUMENT ON POLICY TOWARD THE USSR PRESENTLY BEFORE THE CABINET, AND IN DISCUSSING THIS DOCUMENT BRATTELI HAD MADE CLEAR HE DID NOT WISH IT TO TILT IN ANY WAY AGAINST NORWAY'S WESTERN ALLIES. HENCE, FRYDENLUND HAD TROUBLE BELIEVING BRATTELI
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INTENDED TO MAKE A SPECIAL GESTURE TOWARD THE USSR AT THIS TIME.

4. A CHANCE MEETING WITH BRATTELI AT A RECEPTION ON MAY 23 GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS PUZZLEMENT REGARDING THE SPEECH DIRECTLY TO THE P.M. HE WAS QUITE DEFENSIVE AND EMPHASIZED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ANY JOINT ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS WITH THE USSR IN THE ARCTIC.

5. DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS VIBE ELABORATED TO DCM ON MAY 26 REGARDING FRYDENLUND'S REMARKS. HE SAID FRYDENLUND HAD CONVEYED SUBSTANCE OF MY REMARKS AND THOSE OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO BRATTELI, AS WELL AS THE INTERPRETATION PLACED ON THE SPEECH BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR. (ON MAY 26, UK AMBASSADOR ALSO EXPRESSED HIS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE SPEECH TO FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING VIBE) BRATTELI WAS VERY SURPRISED BY THESE INTERPRETATIONS, SINCE WHAT HE HAD INTENDED BY MORE POINTED LANGUAGE HE HAD PERSONALLY INSERTED IN PLACE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY TEXT WAS TO UNDERSCORE THE NEED FOR CLEAR AGREEMENTS DELIMITING NORWEGIAN AND SOVIET INTERESTS IN THE ARCTIC. THE REFERENCE TO THE BORDER DELIMITATION TALKS WAS INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE SORT OF AGREEMENTS WHICH ARE NECESSARY. VIBE EXPLAINED THAT THE PLANNING DOCUMENT BEFORE THE CABINET OUTLINES VARIOUS POLICY OPTIONS IN RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, RANGING FROM JOINT PROJECTS WITH MOSCOW IN THE NORTH TO ACCEPTANCE OF A LARGE WESTERN PRESENCE THERE. HE EXCLUDED THE POSSIBILITY OF JOINT PROJECTS WITH THE SOVIETS BEING ACCEPTED

AS VALID POLICY OPTION. THE MOST LIKELY DECISION, VIBE THOUGHT, WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A SECURITY ZONE OF SOME WIDTH STILL TO BE DEFINED ALONG THE PROPOSED DEMARCATION LINE, WHICH WOULD BE AN AREA OF EXCLUSIVE NORWEGIAN OPERATIONS. HE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT WESTERN FIRMS MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE IN AREAS LIKE THAT OFF HAMMERFEST (THE SITE OF THE FIRST TEST OIL WELL NORTH OF 62DEGREES IN 1977) WHICH IS REMOVED FROM THE MOST SENSITIVE AREA. VIBE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE POLICY TOWARD THE USSR TO EMERGE FROM CABINET DISCUSSION WOULD BE ARTICULATED IN ANY PARTICULAR FORUM. IT WOULD REMAIN A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT REFLECTED IN FUTURE PUBLIC DECISIONS.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS TAKEN STEPS TO CORRECT ANY MISINTERPRETATIONS OF THE P.M.'S REMARKS AT BRATTELI'S REQUEST. VIBE SAID THAT A MESSAGE WAS BEING SENT TO MOSCOW (AND PRESUMABLY OTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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SELECTED POSTS) SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT. HE ALSO INDICATED AWARENESS OF THE DANGER THAT OFFICIALS LIKE LOS MINISTER JENS EVENSON MAY PLACE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION UPON THE P.M.'S REMARKS. I TOLD FRYDENLUND HOW EVENSON HAS SAID TO ME HE FELT BRATTELI'S REMARKS " WOULD MAKE HIS TASK MUCH EASIER" IN THE UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS IN MOSCOW ON EXTENDING THE FISHERY LIMITS TO 50 OR 200 NAUTICAL MILES. VIBE MADE CLEAR THAT EVENSON HAS NOW BEEN CAREFULLY BRIEFED ON HOW TO INTERPRET THE SPEECH. HE SAID THAT, TO AVOID THE DANGER OF SOVIETS TREATING THE BORDER DELIMITATION, FISHING, AND ECONOMIC ZONE QUESTIONS IN A SINGLE PACKAGE, OSLO HAD PROPOSED THAT DELIMITATION TALKS BE RECONVENED MAY 26 IN OSLO--SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH EVENSON'S MEETINGS IN MOSCOW. (FRYDENLUND'S CONCERN THAT EVENSON MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO WORK OUT SOME PACKAGE DEAL WITH THE SOVIETS, REDOUNDING TO HIS PERSONAL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE, IS ALSO REFLECTED IN FORMIN'S TACTICS). AMBASSADOR KIRICHENKO HAS APPARENTLY TOLD NORWEGIANS HE BELIEVES IT IS MORE REALISTIC TO TALK ABOUT RECONVENING DELIMITATION TALKS EARLY NEXT FALL.

7. NORWEGIANS ARE EVIDENTLY ON POINT OF DECIDING FINALLY WHETHER TO ALLOW WESTERN FIRMS TO ENGAGE IN OFFSHORE OIL ACTIVITY IN SENSITIVE BARENTS SEA AREA. BRATTELI AT LEAST LEFT DOOR AJAR FOR SOME FORM OF ACTIVITY BY STRESSING "NATIONAL CONTROL AND INSPECTION," NOT EXCLUSIVE OPERATIONS, AND BY ARGUING THAT OPENING AREA TO INTERNATIONAL EXPLOITATION "UNDER THE RULES OF SVALBARD TREATY" WOULD NOT BE IN GREAT POWER INTEREST-BUT NOT THEREFORE INCONCEIVABLE. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S ENERGY CHIEF, AMBASSADOR RAVNE, STRESSED LAST WEEK TO DCM THAT BRATTELI HAD NOT EXCLUDED FOREIGN PARTICIPATION UNDER NORWEGIAN CONTROL.

8. IN OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS, WE HAVE (A) URGED THEM TO MAINTAIN FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN FIRM PARTICIPATION IN THE ARCTIC; (B) STRESSED THERE IS NO INHERENT

CONTRADICTION BETWEEN MAINTENANCE OF NORWEGIAN CONTROL, FOREIGN OPERATIONS UNDER NORWEGIAN CONTROL AND RESPECT FOR LEGITIMATE SOVIET SECURITY CONCERNS;AND(C) POINTED OUT THAT BY EXCLUDING ALL WESTERN PRESENCE, NORWEGIANS RISK FINDING THEMSELVES WITHOUT SUPPORT FROM ALLIES WHO WILL FEEL NO PERSONAL STAKE IN OUTCOME OF ANY FUTURE CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITH SOVIETS OVER RESOURCE EXPLOITATION IN BARENTS SEA AREA. EVEN IF NORWEGIANS DO DECIDE TO ALLOW SOME FOREIGN ACTIVITY IN BARENTS SEA, IT WOULD APPEAR THEY WILL
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WISH TO MAKE MOST OF SVALBARD SHELF AN AREA OF EXCLUSIVE NORWEGIAN EXPLOITATION ON SECURITY GROUNDS, ALLOWING FOREIGN ACTIVITY ONLY IN AREAS FURTHER SOUTH AND WEST OFF THE NORWEGIAN MAINLAND. THERE DO NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY PLANS FOR JOINT NORWEGIAN-SOVIET OIL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT AT THIS PHASE.
BYRNE

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